

# Middle Ages Summary

## Changes in Art

- Roman Age art was full of life and reflections of humanity as real people.
- As the Middle Ages moved forward art became less personal
- Byzantine art (Eastern part of Roman Empire) developed with mosaics and icons
- Emphasized symbolism, devotion, and spiritual values
- Devalued the humanity of people and set aside nature and natural beauty.
- Held real beauty but exclusively religious themes with human element removed
- Early Christian art reflected real people living in a real world-

## Decline in Learning

- Monastic orders became center of learning, not general public
- Clerics/clergy preserved the bible and many classics from Greek and Latin philosophers
- Old music was preserved as well – Ambrose (374-397) introduces antiphonal psalmody and hymns

## Christian Teachings Compromised

- Less discipleship (teaching basic truth of scripture) diminished knowledge of faith by laity
- The authority of the church ascended (church teachings held greater weight than scripture)
- Salvation was a mixture of man's works and God's grace, not Faith Alone, Grace Alone, Scripture Alone)
- Christians under Roman rule were persecuted for their faith
- Christians now were becoming the mainstream in culture, however, the early Christians stood because of scripture. In the Middle ages many lines became blurred.
- In the world, not off the world, Poverty verses great wealth. The Pope and the poor
- Early church had high value to share material possessions and care for poor – generous
- St. Francis a major figure in this period – rejected wealth of Papal court and chose poverty
- Mixed in Medieval Ages – church help to regulate interest rates and fair prices in the marketplace.
- Pagan teachings and Greek/Latin philosophers mixed in with Christian teachings
- Tertullian and Cyprian (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century) spoke against this – minority view
- Generally, there was a value for honesty, well-executed artistic work and excellence
- Hospitals and charitable institutions were established by the church
- Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Allegory of God and Bad Government* (1338-9) expresses the value of Christian ideals in governance of society verses the devil presiding over government. (Town Hall, Siena)

## **Rise of Papal Monarchy** – height of Papal powers 1100 – 1300 reached in Middle Ages

- Centralized authority, large bureaucratic structure established, corruption and abuse of authority
- Conciliar Movement – authority in all bishops, not just one,
- Council of Constance (1414-18) deposed three rival Popes in this era.
- Unfortunately, this view failed, and the Papal monarchy became the norm in the Roman Catholic church.

## **Charlemagne**

- Crowned Emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas day 800
- Christendom – Holy Roman Empire – Brining heavenly kingdom to earth
- Had to be Baptized to be a citizen
- Tithing was enforced by the state/church
- Jews were not persons and could lend money at interest (hated in all Europe)
- Church and state become comingled and functioned as one

## **Music of Middle Ages**

- Pope Gregory I – Gregorian chant; mystical, impersonal, other-worldly – plainsong
- Troubadours – secular poets and musicians for entertainment, mostly of the rich
- France and Italy Composers wrote church music and became know by name for first time.

## **Architecture**

- Romanesque – style introduced – rounded arch, thick walls and dim lighting
- Phase two – England, White Tower, Tower of London, Durham Cathedral (rib-vault) 1066-1080
- Gothic – 1140 Abbot Sugar, Saint Denis, Paris – Pointed arches, high large windows, rose window
- 1194 – Cathedral of Chartres – flying buttress, rib-vault

## **Universities**

- Rival education of the clergy
- Language in the vernacular (even some early translation of the bible were developed)
- Increasing rise in humanism and distortion of early church faith and doctrine (basic truth)
- Man was moving into the center of meaning of life and God was diminishing
- The foundation of the *Renaissance* was being born (*Renaissance* means “rebirth”)

## **Thomas Aquinas**

- Most influential writer and theologian of his day and great impact of Roman Catholic church
- Incomplete understanding of the fall – man’s will had fallen, but not his intellect
- Strongly influence by Aristotle and some of Plato mixing the teaching of scripture with pagan philosophers.
- Result – the divine revelation contained in scripture was but as co-equal to philosophy
- Man’s mind was independent and autonomous, so it moved humanism to explain meaning of life
- Pope Urban IV forbade the study and reading of Aristotle, however, this was ignored by Thomas

## **Conclusions**

- Without starting with a divine revelation that gives absolutes for morals, values, and meaning, mankind will struggle.
- By shifting the starting point to man at the center and from there determining meaning there will be a break down in how we live.
- The distortion of biblical Christianity began in the Middle Ages a mixture of Christian and non-Christian thought.
- The authority of the Church superseded the authority of scripture and great error entered in.